



New York State Aquaculture Association

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NYSAquaneWS

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Headlines from 2008

During the past year, your association has worked tirelessly to bring our industry's message to the attention of legislators, the DEC, as well as Ag. and Markets officials. Beginning with the Farm Bureau Lobby Days effort in February and continuing with delegations attending NYS Food Council meetings in Albany, Binghamton, Rochester and Long Island, we have been informing, educating and involving government leaders in aquaculture as never before. In May, Governor Paterson and U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer were directly briefed in Batavia at an agriculture forum. I was impressed with the Governors understanding of our issues and with the behind the scenes support he has given us during the summer and fall.

In addition to becoming a presence in Albany, we have been striving to become a positive influence on issues facing the industry. Fish health inspection reform is still our number one issue. Working with animal health scientists at Cornell University we will continue to support the establishment of a fish health inspection facility their in 2009. Increasing market share is another important topic we have emphasized in 2008. In order for our industry to thrive, we must continually grow our businesses and capture more local markets. In 2009 the sale of NYS Trout and black bass as food fish will continue to be another of our major issues to discuss with government officials.

In terms of bringing the membership together, the association's Intersector meetings have helped immensely. Under the leadership of our colleagues Tom Field, who retired last spring, and Laurie Trotta, the current chairperson, this forum has helped bridge the gap between growers, government and researchers over the last dozen years. September's Aquaculture Forum sponsored by the Dept. of Ag. & Markets at the State Fairground opened the door for progressive dialogue on aquaculture in our state. Speakers from DEC, Cornell University, USDA Financial and the NYS Pride of New York Program gave presentations. In 2009, we hope to cultivate more educational forums of this type.

Many of these accomplishments would not have occurred without the help and support many key players. The New York State Farm Bureau has been and continues to be a significant factor in our success. Early in our organizational process, Farm Bureau Officials welcomed us into their organization and assigned key personnel to teach us the ropes and assist us in effective communications with government leaders. We owe much to the Farm Bureau and encourage those of you not already members, to join and support the Farm Bureau in your area. For information on joining, go to www.nysfb.org. The researchers and scientists at Cornell University have also played key roles in our ability to explain fish health issues to our membership, government leaders and the public at large. Their unconditional support and expertise has played a significant role in our ability to inform and educate both the public and government leaders on issues facing NYS Aquaculture.

You the membership however, have played the most important role in our success in 2008. Your individual efforts in showcasing your businesses in the news media, discussions with local government officials, willingness to get involved at key junctures, all have helped boost our industry in 2008. Your continued support in 2009 will help continue our cause and help make aquaculture a major player in the states family of agricultural industries. When issues of regulation, licensure, husbandry or technology cause you difficulties, don't hesitate to contact your association by e-mail or phone for support. We are here to serve you and grow the industry statewide. We can only do that when you contact us with a question or concern.

VHS Interim Rule Delayed Indefinitely

On September 9, 2008, USDA-APHIS published an interim rule in the Federal Register to restrict the interstate movement and importation into the United States of live fish that are susceptible to viral hemorrhagic septicemia, a highly contagious disease of certain freshwater and saltwater fish. That interim rule was scheduled to become effective on November 10, 2008. Subsequently, on October 28, 2008, USDA-APHIS published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the delay of the effective date of the interim rule until January 9, 2009. USDA-APHIS is now delaying the effective date of the interim rule indefinitely to provide APHIS with time to make some adjustments to the interim rule that are necessary for the rule to be successfully implemented.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. P. Gary Egrie, Senior Staff Veterinary Medical Officer, National Center for Animal Health Programs, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 46, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 734-0695; or Dr. Peter L. Merrill, Senior Staff Veterinarian, National Center for Import and Export, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 39, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 734-8364.

The NYS Cooperative Extension is Ready to Help You

Over the years, the Cornell Cooperative extension has been helping rural business people in every type of agricultural endeavor. Aquaculture is an area where extension specialists and knowledgeable experts stand ready to lend a hand to make your business more successful. In a report released by the Northeast Regional Aquaculture

Center, New York's Cooperative Extension Agents and their areas of expertise were highlighted. I have contacted each of those listed and asked them to describe their area of interest and the services they are able to provide growers. Here are the names of the extensions agents who responded, their contact information and a brief summary of the type of service they provide.

Mike Timmons – Recirculation System Design, 607-255-1630

e-mail: mbt3@cornell.edu

Dr. Mike Timmons has been a supporter of the NYS Aquaculture Association since its inception in 1985. To say that he wrote the book on recirculation aquaculture would be an understatement, for in fact he has written several books on the subject and engineered many projects all over the Northeast. I recently purchased his latest book entitled "Recirculating Aquaculture" NRAC Publication No. 01-007; copyright 2007 and found it to be exceptional and chockfull of important information. If you would like to get a copy Dr. Timmons' book, just e-mail him at the above address for details. In a nut shell, Mike is ready to provide general consultation on aspects of indoor recirculating aquaculture to growers and conducts an annual 1-week short course on principles of recirculating aquaculture. I attended Mike's short course in 1998 and implemented many new concepts into my own operation. I would recommend the course to anyone contemplating expanding their business or updating their current aquaculture facilities.

Gregg Rivara – Shellfish/Commercial Production, 631-727-7850

e-mail: gjr3@cornell.edu

Gregg Rivara is an Aquaculture Specialist for the Cornell Cooperative Extension of the Suffolk County Marine Program. He works with established shellfish farmers, as well as new and prospective aquaculturists, on Long Island. He assists with farm sitting, permitting and problem solving (for example predators, pests and diseases of cultured shellfish). Applied research and demonstration projects are a significant part of the job. Past projects have included the study of juvenile oyster disease, oyster brood stock nutrition and new nursery technologies. Making the results available to the industry is an important part of this work, which is usually supported by outside grants and contracts.

Often the job is to give a "reality check" to someone who thinks he or she has a great idea, usually as a result of seeing something in the media. Many times the prospective culturist has not researched the business in depth. It is the aquaculture specialist's job to point out problems or shortcomings with a proposed aquaculture venture before investments are made.

All townships in Nassau and Suffolk Counties use shellfish seed for resource enhancement in their waters. Some of the same problems and solutions encountered by commercial shellfish farms are shared by these taxpayer-supported programs. Indeed, there has been much cross pollination between the commercial and noncommercial sectors over the decades since the town programs got started in the 1970's. The

aquaculture specialist works with these programs in much the same way as with commercial operations.

Ken Gall – Seafood Marketing, 631-632-6580

Email: klg9@cornell.edu

New York Sea Grant's "Seafood Technology" site features a variety of the program's education efforts and research projects relevant to aquaculture operations. Growers can learn more about these programs at:

<http://www.seagrantsunysb.edu/seafood/default.asp>

Some examples are the following three program efforts:

NY Sea Grant's Seafood Specialist, Ken Gall provides leadership for **HACCP training** programs in NY and across the U.S. He is a member of the National Seafood HACCP Alliance Steering Committee, which developed and revised the standardized training curriculum used across the U.S. and around the world. Since December 18, 1997, a U.S. FDA regulation has required all seafood processors, including firms that handle, pack, store, or label seafood, to develop and implement a HACCP Plan to control all food safety hazards. Thousands of seafood processors, wholesalers, packing docks, and shellfish shippers in New York and across the U.S. must comply with this regulation. The training program has a format that consists of an Internet course (Segment One) plus a 1 day "live" course (Segment Two). For information and to register for the Internet course go to: <http://seafoodhaccp.cornell.edu> To see a schedule and registration form for the "live" Segment Two course go to: <http://seafood.ucdavis.edu/haccp/training/ny.htm>

Good manufacturing practices or GMPs describe the conditions and practices that are necessary for the processing, packing or storage of food to ensure its safety and wholesomeness. The current federal GMP regulation specifically applies to all food products regulated by FDA, and can be found in Part 110 of Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations. It outlines the basic sanitary controls that are required for all food processing plants, wholesale or food distribution firms and warehouses or food storage facilities that handle, store or process FDA-regulated food. This GMP regulation also provides a framework for the specific state regulations that may apply to these firms. For information and registration go to: <http://gmptesting.aem.cornell.edu>

Listeria monocytogenes (Lm) is a food borne microbial pathogen that can grow under conditions that usually inhibit the growth of other pathogens such as temperatures as low as 34 degrees F and up to 10% water phase salt. Lm is widespread in the environment, and can be found in soil, water, sewage, and decaying vegetation. It can be readily isolated from humans, domestic animals, raw agricultural and fishery products, food processing environments, and the home. The organism can be found in a wide variety of foods, including meats, poultry, vegetables, dairy products, and

seafood products. It has frequently been isolated from seafood products, and various studies conducted around the world have estimated an incidence level of 6-36% in cold smoked salmon and cooked fish and shellfish products. Foods implicated in outbreaks and sporadic cases almost always are refrigerated products that can support the growth of this organism. Under current US regulatory policy, *L. monocytogenes* is not acceptable at any level in RTE food products including seafood. Its presence in a wide variety of RTE food products has resulted in numerous product recalls and in many cases large economic losses. *Listeria monocytogenes* survives extremely well in the processing plant environment. It may be introduced into plants through a variety of routes, including raw materials, employees' shoes or clothes, and equipment. Lm also tends to form a biofilm to enhance its survival when resident populations become established in niches in the plant. These resident populations are not easily eliminated by general cleaning and sanitizing procedures. Implementing an effective *Listeria* control program is a long-term commitment. Based on our current understanding, there are at least five key elements that need to be included in an effective Lm control program for RTE seafood products. These elements are: 1. Specific Sanitation and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Controls, 2. Training of Plant Personnel, 3. Environmental Monitoring and Testing, 4. Refrigeration of finished products below 38 degrees F from production to consumption, and 5. Raw Material Controls. NY Sea Grant's Seafood Specialist, Ken Gall collaborates with colleagues at Cornell University, other universities around the U.S., regulatory agencies national seafood industry trade associations, and individual firms that process smoked fish and other ready-to-eat seafood products to develop and evaluate effective control strategies for *Listeria*. (add others here)

Biosecurity Workshop Scheduled

In cooperation with the NYS DEC, NYS Dept. of Ag. & Markets, Micro Technologies of Maine, and Hicklings Fish Farm, Inc., we are pleased to announce the first major aquaculture industry event for 2009. On April 8, 2009, Michele Walsh, DVM, Staff Veterinarian from Micro Technologies, Inc, will conduct a biosecurity workshop for all interested parties at Hicklings Fish Farm, Inc., Edmeston, New York. The workshop will be offered free of charge and feature a tour of the Hickling facilities as part of the program. Vince and Darin Hickling will also be providing all participants with a complementary lunch as part of this important educational effort. More information will be coming out on this event in our next newsletter, but save April 8, 2009 on your calendar now for this is going to be one of our showcase events of 2009.

Farm Bureau Lobby Days Coming Soon

As last year, the NYS Farm Bureau Lobby Days in Albany was one of the premiere events of the year. During the course of a two day period growers from all sectors of agriculture had an opportunity to meet directly with state legislators to discuss issues facing their industries. Jim Kennedy and I represented your Association and found the experience very rewarding. This year we will be sending another delegation to continue

that important work. Thus far issues like fish health inspections, food fish sales and production as well as regulation reform are amongst the topics we wish to keep on the front burner for agriculture committees in both the State Senate and Assembly. If you have other special issue you would like us to pursue on your behalf, please reduce your thoughts to writing and e-mail them to me as soon as possible. The executive council will be finalizing our Lobby Days goals by January 15, 2009; so if you have concerns you would like addressed with legislators; please get them to me soon.

Your Friend in Aquaculture,

Ted Universal
President
NYS Aquaculture Association